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Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15
HA-05 /078 W
----------021862 070733Z /21
R 061719Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8011
USIA WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS PORT AU PRINCE 1328
E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, HA
SUBJECT: INCREASED PUBLIC DEBATE OF PRESS FREEDOM

1. ON MARCH 31, PRO-GOVERNMENT DAILY, LE MATIN, BEGAN SERIALIZING THE COMPLETE TEXT OF THE REPORT ON HAITI MADE BY THE TWO-MAN COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON PRESS FREEDOM OF INTER-AMERICAN PRESS ASSOCIATION WHICH VISITED HERE IN LATE FEBRUARY. LE MATIN EX-PLAINED THAT IT WAS PRINTING THE 12-PAGE REPORT, WHICH CONTAINS FRANK DESCRIPTIONS OF RECENT EVENTS CONCERNING THE HAITIAN NEWS MEDIA AND CHARACTERIZATIONS OF HAITIAN SOCIETY IN GENERAL HITHERTO UNPRINTED IN THIS COUNTRY, SO AS TO DISPEL UNFOUNDED RUMORS ABOUT THE REPORT'S CONTENT.

2. ON APRIL 4, LE MATIN PRINTED BOTH THE THIRD INSTALLMENT OF THE REPORT AND STRONG CRITICISM OF CERTAIN OF ITS ASPECTS BY THE PAPER'S CO-EDITOR DUMAYRIC CHARLIER. IN HIS ROLE AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ASSOCIATION OF HAITIAN JOURNALISTS (AJH), CHARLIER LASHED OUT AGAINST THE IAPA REPORT'S CRITICISM OF THE ASSOCIATION. THE INVESTIGATORS HAD REPORTED THAT FOREIGN DIPLOMATS AND SOME HAITIAN JOURNALISTS DESCRIBED THE ASSOCIATION AS A ONE-MAN OPERATION UNDER THE CONTROL OF CHARLIER. IN HIS DENIAL, CHARLIER RESPONDED THAT WHILE
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HAITIAN JOURNALISTS HAVE THE RIGHT TO THEIR OPINION, EVEN IF ABUSIVE AND LIBELOUS, HE FOUND THE UNTIMELY INTRUSION OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATS INCOMPREHENSIBLE IN A QUESTION WHICH CAN ONLY BE OF INTEREST TO HAITIAN NATIONALS. CHARLIER STATED THAT THIS WAS PROOF, AT LEAST, THAT THE AJH WAS NOT A PAWN OF FOREIGN DIPLOMATS. WHILE STRONGLY DENYING THE CHARGE THAT THE AJH REPRESENTED THE INTERESTS OF THE GOH

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OVER THOSE OF THE JOURNALISTS, CHARLIER ASSERTED THAT THERE WAS NO REASON WHY A PRESS ASSOCIATION WAS OBLIGED TO BE DEEPLY HOSTILE TO ITS OWN GOVERNMENT.

3. LE MATIN'S SERIALIZATION OF THE IAPA REPORT CONTINUES. THE REPORT IS BEING WIDELY QUOTED ON HAITIAN RADIO AND EVEN ON TELEVISION NEWS WHICH TRADITIONALLY AVOIDS CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS.

4. IN ANOTHER MEDIA DEVELOPMENT, ARMY BRIGADIER GENERAL FREDERIC ARTY, IN A LETTER TO THE WEEKLY LE PETIT SAMEDI SOIR, DENIED THAT JOURNAL'S CLAIM THAT SECOND LIEUTENANT CLAUDE REMY WAS THE FIRST MILITARY OFFICER IN 20 YEARS TO BE TRIED FOR MURDERING A CIVILIAN. ARTY LISTED TWO OFFICERS (INCLUDING REMY) AND 31 OTHER MEMBERS OF THE HAITIAN MILITARY AND POLICE FORCES WHO HAD BEEN COURT MARTIALED IN THE LAST THREE YEARS FOR CRIMES OF ASSAULT AND BATTERY OR HOMICIDE, ALL BUT TWO COMMITTED AGAINST CIVILIANS. ARTY ALSO CITED THREE OFFICERS WHO HAD BEEN CONVICTED EARLIER--IN 1967 AND 1971--OF HOMI-CIDE AND SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS. IN COMMENTING ON THE LETTER, THE JOURNAL SALUTED THE POSITIVE RESULTS OF DIALOGUE IN A COUNTRY BECOMING ACQUAINTED WITH DEMOCRACY.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, INFORMATION MEDIA, THE PRESS, POLITICAL FREEDOM
Control Number: n/a
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Draft Date: 06 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3053909
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INCREASED PUBLIC DEBATE OF PRESS FREEDOM
TAGS: SHUM, SOPN, HA
To: STATE USIA
Type: TE
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Review Markings:
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